



United States Attorney District of New Jersey

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CONTACT: Rebekah Carmichael

Office of Public Affairs

(973) 645-2888

NEW JERSEY MAN PLEADS GUILTY TO LYING TO TERRORISM INVESTIGATORS

NEWARK, N.J. – A Bayonne, New Jersey man admitted today to lying to officials investigating Mohamed Alessa and Carlos E. Almonte – two New Jersey men recently charged in connection with an alleged conspiracy to kill on behalf of a terrorist group in Somalia, United States Attorney Paul J. Fishman announced.

Mohamed Osman, 19, pleaded guilty before Senior United States District Judge Dickinson R. Debevoise to making materially false statements to investigators in a matter involving international terrorism. Mohamed Mahmood Alessa, 21, of North Bergen, N.J., and Carlos Eduardo Almonte, 24, of Elmwood Park, N.J., were arrested at JFK International Airport in New York in June, where they allegedly intended to take separate flights to Egypt on their way to Somalia to join designated Foreign Terrorist Organization Al Shabaab. The pair are charged in a criminal Complaint with conspiring to kill, maim, and kidnap persons outside the United States.

According to documents filed and statements made in Newark federal court:

During a June interview with members of the FBI's Joint Terrorism Task Force ("JTTF"), Osman falsely denied knowing about Alessa and Almonte's plans to travel to Somalia to fight against government and multinational peacekeeping forces there.

Among other things, Osman specifically admitted that he had learned about Alessa and Almonte's ideology and beliefs during their interactions, and that he had heard Alessa say he would start killing in the United States if he was unable to do it abroad. Osman also admitted that he willfully lied to investigators after being informed that they were conducting an international terrorism investigation and that it was against the law to make false statements during the interview.

U.S. Attorney Fishman stated: "Witnesses who attempt to mislead law enforcement officials interfere with the critical work of those who keep us safe. Especially in cases with national security implications, we will insure that the consequences for such actions are appropriately severe."

Because his alleged false statements pertained to a terrorism investigation, Osman faces a maximum potential penalty of eight years in prison and a \$250,000 fine. Judge Debevoise ordered Mr. Osman released on \$10,000 bail pending his sentencing, scheduled for December 20, 2010.

U.S. Attorney Fishman praised the outstanding work of the FBI; members of the Newark JTTF, including the New Jersey State Police; and the New York City Police Department for the investigation leading to today's plea.

The government is represented by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Andrew Kogan and L. Judson Welle of the United States Attorney's Office National Security Unit.

The charge and allegations contained in the complaint against Alessa and Almonte are merely accusations, and the defendants are presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty.

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Defense counsel: Stacy Ann Biancamano, Esq., West Orange, N.J.